



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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CHAFEE-SPONSORED WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH ACT REAUTHORIZATION IS APPROVED BY SENATE

Bill Supports a Valuable Program at the University of Rhode Island

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Yesterday, the U.S. Senate approved S. 1017, the Water Resources Research Act Amendments of 2005 by unanimous consent. Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) was the lead cosponsor of the measure, which supports a valuable program at the University of Rhode Island.

Enacted in 1964, the Water Resources Research Act authorized the establishment of a nationwide, state-based network of Water Resources Research Institutes. These Institutes represent a partnership among state universities; federal, state, and local governments; and stakeholders aimed at solving problems of water supply and water quality. They are located at the land-grant universities in each of the 50 states, the territories and the District of Columbia. The Act was last reauthorized in 2000, and is set to expire in fiscal year 2005.

The current proposal would provide \$12 million in fiscal years 2006 through 2008 and \$13 million in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 for Water Resources Research Institutes across the nation. It will further provide \$6 million in fiscal years 2006 through 2008 and \$7 million in fiscal year 2009 through 2010 for the Act's Interstate Research Program. The current appropriation for the programs is \$6.5 million and \$1 million per year, respectively.

The legislation now moves forward for consideration by the House of Representatives. Upon its passage, Senator Chafee made the following statement:

“For many years, the network of Water Research Institutes has provided important support to the states in their long-term water planning, policy development, and management. A significant portion of the Institutes’ work is intended to help state and

local water managers implement federal regulations in ways that are tailored to local and state institutions and natural conditions. Water quality regulations, drinking water standards, wastewater treatment, and water reuse programs are examples of areas in which the Institutes provide research and information sharing.

The Rhode Island Water Resources Center is located at the University of Rhode Island. The Center's recent activities have included working with the Rhode Island Airport Corporation to develop a plan for mitigating runoff contamination due to deicing and anti-icing operations at T.F.Green Airport. Other work conducted by the Center has encompassed evaluating streams and river banks in the state to study how they may be affected by land use and other changes; developing a statewide public water-supply Geographical Information System coverage program; and working with communities to evaluate MTBE drinking water contamination.

In addition to research, the activities of the Institutes are highly valued by multi-level stakeholders at the local, state and regional levels. The Institutes are the training grounds for the next generation of the nation's water scientists, economists and engineers. This nationwide network of water institutes provides an efficient and effective method to meet the diverse water resource needs in different parts of our country.

Another key component of the program is its small federal grants for leveraging funding from non-federal sources to identify and address local and state needs for water research. The federal grants help to expand the Institute's leverage capacity for conducting water research activities and are the key to maintaining a valuable national network.

I look forward working to ensure this national network of university-based research institutes continues to support the water resources needs of the nation."

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